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## **Minutes City of Tempe Ad-Hoc Towing Committee December 12, 2007**

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**Minutes of the City of Tempe Ad-Hoc Towing Committee held on Monday, April 10, 2006, 2:30 p.m., at the City of Tempe Public Works Transit Small Conference Room, 20 E. Sixth Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Tempe, Arizona.**

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Pete Colantoni, Randy Fougner, Conor Gleason, Darwyn Harp, Mary Wade, John Wicke, Chris Wilson

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Jane Neuheisel

**City Staff Present:**

Carlos de Leon, Sue Taaffe, Amber Miller

**Guests Present:**

Thom Anderson (Resident), Jeffrey Dunn (ACT Towing), Eric Emmert (Dorn Policy Group), Troy Meyers (Auto Citi Towing), Moonshadow (Barmier Building), Tom O'Brian (SWAT Towing), Suzanne Scoleri (ACT Towing)

Chris Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

**Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances**

The Ad-hoc Towing Committee welcomed public comment only for items listed on this agenda with a three-minute time limit per citizen.

Thom Anderson, a Tempe Resident, made the following comments:

- He is an ASU graduate, both a home and small business owner, has been a resident of Tempe for 15 years, and is concerned with the signage fees and fines.
- In reference to Sec. 32-2 subsection (a): Thom states that he has frequently seen tow trucks back into vehicles without being hooked up to the truck, and charge a \$140 fee- which is in direct violation.
- In reference to Sec. 32-2 subsection (c): Thom states that it is subject to fees.
- In reference to Sec. 32-2 subsection (d): Thom states that releasing documentation as proof is the number one complaint according to an article on azcentral.com.
- In reference to Sec. 32-4 subsection (4): Thom states that sometimes a vehicle is towed right around the corner which can be considered theft.

- In reference to Sec. 32-7 subsection (b): Thom states that he would like to see signage revised to four to seven feet in plain view since visibility is decreased at 10 feet above the ground at night.

Randy Fougner added that for signage you also have to take into consideration high profile vehicles, and suggests verbiage read "will be mounted at a minimum height of five (5) feet and a maximum height of ten (10) feet above the ground *AND be clearly visible.*"

Troy Meyers, from Auto Citi Towing, made the following comments regarding signage:

- When signs get low, they are subject to vandalism. Posting them at nine to ten feet get them out of the range of possible vandalism.
- For some buildings it is not physically possible, but it's mostly due to negligence.
- Tempe signage is more than ample size.

#### **Agenda Item 2 – Discussion on Potential Refinements to Towing Code**

Chris Wilson presented the following information:

- Every complaint except two involves one company and three parking lots.
- The property owner chooses to tow.
- Concerns include:
  - High fees
  - Towing around the corner
  - Not releasing issues
- In the downtown area parking lots touch. Discussion needs to happen about the level of identification on signage that show who the lot is reserved for.
- The focus of the meeting is for city wide towing, and discussion of signage, fees, fines, and release issues.

Randy Fougner added that the problem is signs get too wordy and become logistically difficult.

Pete Colantoni stated that input was brought from the city sign department for size, text, and height.

Chris Wilson added that the size and height are within the city code.

Carlos de Leon stated that last year a typical template was developed based on the code. He recommends that the name of the property be identified on signage, which most properties are already doing.

Darwyn Harp echoed Carlos's feedback. He believes it is a responsibility and not a burden to identify the appropriate business, and make it clear who should or should not park there.

Chris Wilson presented the following information:

- The issue is the cost for changing the signs.
- The entire city needs to be uniform.
- Some towing companies provide signage, and does not believe it is an undue burden to identify the company.

Pete Colantoni added that posted "Authorized Parking Only" signs will diminish the amount of tows; however, people that ignore signs will still ignore signs.

Chris Wilson reminded the committee that language of the ordinance would not be written during the December meeting, but instead putting forth ideas to determine issues to discuss.

The committee continued with discussion and agreed that issues to look at include:

- Signage and property identification
- Drop fees
- Vehicles being towed to other lots and getting the vehicle back from the posted release address
- Authorization to release a vehicle
- Conflicts between Chapter 32 (city) and Title 49 (federal)
- Communication and outreach

#### **Agenda Item 3 – Potential Communication and Outreach Efforts**

Sue Taaffe presented the following potential outreach tools:

- Information previously mailed out with the Tempe water bill to 40,000 residents as well as a mailing with the Tax and License division.
- Recently created new web address at [www.tempe.gov/towing](http://www.tempe.gov/towing). The committee was asked to review the site for accuracy.
- Worked with ASU, DTC, and TCVB to mail to various groups.
- Participated in an email blast sent to 25 towing companies.
- Suggests web address be added to signage.
- Can obtain a list of towing companies registered with DPS.

Carlos de Leon stated that the purpose of outreach is to inform both the public and companies of the changes.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be determined by committee member availability and pushed out to late January or early February. Committee members will be notified of future meetings by both postal and electronic mail.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

The Ad-Hoc Towing Committee's next regular meeting will be held in the City of Tempe Public Works Transit Small Conference Room, 20 E. Sixth Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

Prepared by:  
Amber Miller

Reviewed by:

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Carlos de Leon  
Deputy Public Works Manager